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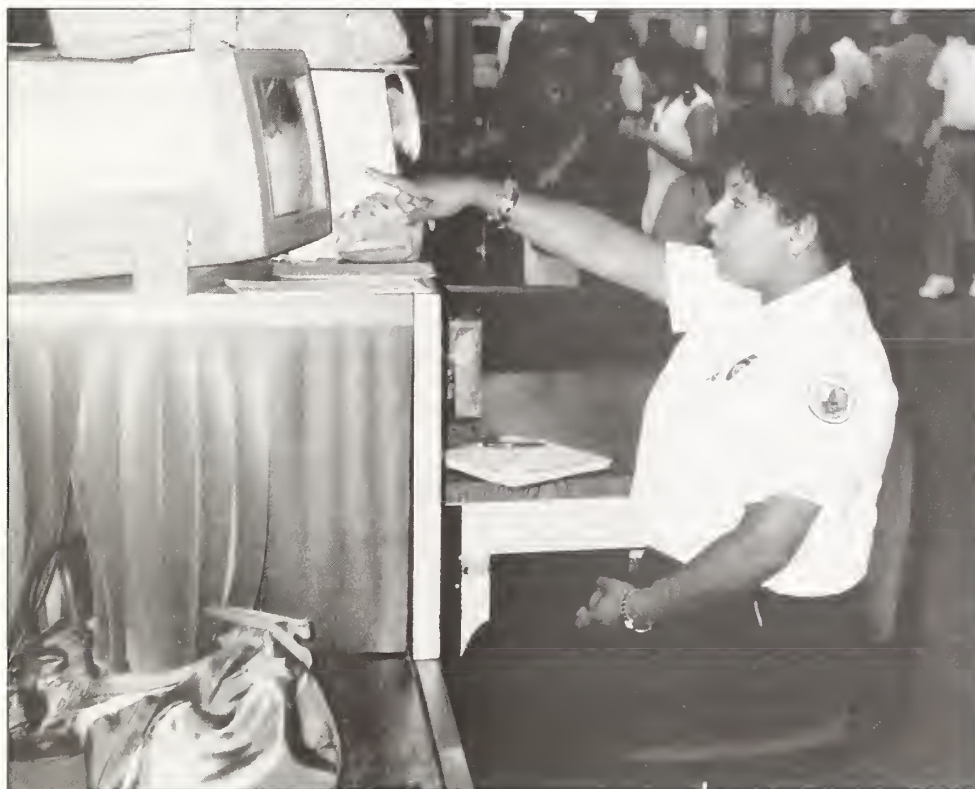
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Inside APHIS

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Operator Uses Her Sixth Sense at San Diego Port



PPQ technician Adela Cuevas interprets what the x-ray machine uncovers at the Port of San Diego, CA. Story on page 3.

APHIS PHOTO BY KARL PARKER

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Five Are Picked to Advocate Field Vision Work

On December 9, 1996, five employees arrived at Riverdale, MD, from Georgia, Alabama, California, Hawaii, and South Dakota to prepare themselves to become field advocates for the APHIS vision. From their present positions in the field, Edgardo Arza, Mollie Frazier, Barbara Maehler, Tim Ohashi, and Greg Taylor will be spending 20 percent of their time this year working on the vision and the Change Agenda with other field employees.

The selectees were narrowed through an application process by members of the Achieving-the-Vision and Valuing-People-Through-Continual-Learning teams. Final candidates participated in an interview process and briefing with APHIS Manage-

ment Team (AMT) members, who selected the five advocates. To compete for the positions, employees had to meet the following qualifications: demonstrate an awareness of and support for the vision and Change Agenda; have a current performance rating of at least fully successful; work in a high-graded position in the field; and have access to all employees via telephone, fax, and/or other electronic communication systems. In addition, the applicants needed recommendations from their supervisor and two co-workers.

"A vision advocate is someone who can energize people and groups by modeling a shared leadership style," says Jane

(See VISION ADVOCATES on page 3)

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor:

In the November/December 1996 issue you reported the successful effort to eradicate the screwworm fly from Honduras. This is a remarkable achievement. However, the report omits things.

The article refers to two Agricultural Research Service scientists who developed the sterile fly technology. Why don't you identify these pioneers? At least one of these scientists, Dr. Knippling, continues his research, according to a recent item in the "Texas Aggie," even though he must be in his eighties.

The sidebar that accompanies the article is incomplete. First, you do not mention the pilot project conducted in the Caribbean, on Aruba, as I recall. Had this project not been successful, none of the events in the sidebar would have occurred.

You also ignored the successful program conducted in Puerto Rico. This program had several unique challenges. It involved teamwork by several groups—the commonwealth, the Air Force, the Navy, personnel at the screwworm plant, other APHIS personnel, and Commonwealth livestock interests,

to name some. All worked together in splendid fashion to achieve eradication.

The logistics of this effort were awesome: Air Force planes based in California flew to the screwworm plant in Texas to load a cargo of sterile flies. They carried these to Roosevelt Roads, where the flies were kept until dispersed. Little was known about the effect high-altitude flights might have on the flies. Dispersal was by traditional low-level flights along a grid. I admire the plane crews and the dispersal personnel who flew these hazardous missions in constant turbulence. Although air sickness was common, no accidents occurred.

Puerto Rico contains many small valleys, often only a few hectares in area. The valley walls are steep, causing the traditional air drop of flies to miss some of these valleys. To overcome this problem, many flies were released by ground personnel on foot.

Other than the pilot project, this was the first attempt to eradicate the screwworm fly in the tropics. If I am mistaken, I apologize....

Milton J. Tillery
Laurel, MD

Dear Editor:

I am one of those lucky ones who is still on the go after retiring in October 1969 after 37 years with USDA.

I started out in the old AAA in 1933. I went up the ladder and retired as port inspector at San Pedro, CA (Los Angeles) under the Sacramento office.

The APHIS [newsletter] is very interesting and informative about what is going on, especially regarding the importation of animals. I'd like to see more information about the alpacas and llamas imported from Peru so the public is aware about the precautions we take for the protection of our livestock interests here in the United States. I remember the time a llama arrived from Peru and was sent back the next day on the same plane!

Three of us—John R. Wickham, Robert J. Brennan, and I—live here in Southern California. We have contact with each other often. I enjoy reading about other retirees in "Inside APHIS."

John O. Peterson
Rancho Palos Verdes, CA

25th Anniversary of the Agency

Wednesday, April 2, 1997 will mark the 25th anniversary of the founding of APHIS. As you may recall, on April 2, 1992, we celebrated the first 20 years of APHIS' existence. A committee is now making plans for appropriate ceremonies to mark our 25th anniversary, both at headquarters

and at field locations throughout the country and internationally. You can find out more about our anniversary plans through the APHIS Web (<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphisweb>). Just go there, click on "Employees' Favorite Web Sites," then on "APHIS," and then on "APHIS' 25th Anniversary." ♦

Farewell

Mary Yurkovich, editor/designer of *Inside APHIS*, retires at the end of January. We in LPA will miss her charm, friendship, team spirit, and easy-going demeanor. Mary has been the driving force behind this publication for 2 years and has been instrumental in making

every issue reflect the pride, professionalism, and accomplishments of our diverse and proud APHIS family. Her expertise and knowledge will be greatly missed along with her contagious smile. We in LPA wish her the fondest of farewells and health and happiness for a prosperous future. ♦

Inside APHIS

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North of the Border, San Diego Technician is a Legend

By Karl Parker, PPQ, San Diego, CA, Work Unit

PPQ technician Adela Cuevas has an instinct for detecting contraband. She also is an expert at reading the x-ray machine at her San Ysidro, CA, work station, part of the Port of San Diego just south of San Diego, CA.

Recently, while monitoring an x-ray machine at the San Ysidro pedestrian crossing, Cuevas noticed something odd about the five hair mousse cans inside the luggage of a pedestrian crossing the border from Mexico. Instead of having the homogenous appearance of hair mousse, the material inside the cans looked lumpy. Cuevas alerted a U.S. Customs supervisor, who pulled the suitcase and its owner into secondary inspection for a closer look.

Hair Mousse Cans

When the Customs inspector examined the cans, they appeared to be completely normal; however when each can was opened, it

yielded about 1.3 pounds of heroin. The total amount of the seizure was 6.40 pounds. For this tip, Cuevas received a letter of appreciation from both the Customs port director and from PPQ Port Director Hector Baez.

While checking the x-ray monitor for agricultural products, Cuevas' sharp eye routinely uncovers items of interest to Customs. If she sees that travelers are bringing in alcohol, drug paraphernalia, or weapons, she refers them to Customs' inspectors.

INS Assistant

Cuevas is also a legend among U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) inspectors. In the 8 years that she has worked for PPQ at the Port of San Diego, she has identified and referred to INS hundreds of travelers who turn out to be aliens with forged documents.

Of course, Cuevas keeps a sharp lookout for agricultural quarantine items as she reads the x-ray monitor. She reads the

machine flawlessly for agricultural quarantine items and refers these to the PPQ officers for action. She and five to six other x-ray technicians typically find hundreds of agricultural quarantine items each day in the hand-carried packages of pedestrians. Items include prohibited fruit, vegetables, meat, eggs, plants, seeds, and soil. In fiscal year 1996, 13.5 million vehicles and 8.7 million pedestrians crossed into the United States from Mexico through San Ysidro. PPQ intercepted more than 36,000 quarantine materials, and a lot of the interceptions were due to Cuevas' skills and her undeviating instinct for contraband. Cuevas has certainly earned the admiration and respect of all of her fellow employees at the Port of San Diego. ♦

Editor's note: Cuevas' photo appears on page 1 of this issue.

Reaching for the Vision

Vision Advocates, From Page 1

Berkow, new chief of OPD's Organizational Development staff. "Other attributes include encouraging and supporting employees' behaviors, attitudes, actions, and strategies that will help us realize the vision. These vision advocates will support field employees wanting to become actively involved in visioning work and help them figure out ways to overcome obstacles and implement their ideas," Berkow adds.

In the coming year, the five vision advocates will be helping employees in the field change supervisory and managerial leadership to shared leadership through teamwork, customer service, and continual learning in the areas of science, technology,

and other information. They will help employees change to innovative regulatory systems and incorporate a global orientation and environmental awareness into their day-to-day work.

Through regularly scheduled communication with the AMT, these vision advocates will be developing tactics and strategies to advance a realization of the vision and Change Agenda. They will report obstacles to the AMT and options for overcoming them. They will consult with each other on biweekly teleconferences about recommendations to the AMT.

"We are impressed with these advocates and are convinced they will provide the AMT with an invaluable link to the field," says

OPD director Sharon Coursey. "Because of their empathy with field employees, their communication and problem-solving skills, and their concern for organizational improvement and innovation, these five vision advocates will be able to forward to the AMT candid and open assessments of field problems and points of view. They will be critical in helping us balance field and headquarters perspectives needed before we can make the changes that will achieve our vision."

In the spring, the field vision advocates will be sponsoring an event to celebrate accomplishments and plan future implementation strategies. (See VISION ADVOCATES on page 4)



APHIS PHOTO BY ANN CZAPIEWSKI

Vision advocates plan for the year with vision committee members in Riverdale, MD. Clockwise from the left are Kristin Schmitz (OPD), Tim Ohashi (field vision advocate), Mollie Frazier (field vision advocate), Tim Blackburn (OPD), Barbara Frazier (field vision advocate), Matina Sawaki (PPD), Greg Taylor (field vision advocate), Edgardo Arza (field vision advocate).

Edgardo Arza

Currently the area veterinarian in charge (AVIC) of VS in Georgia, Arza arranged to have the first vision workshop in the Southeastern Region in 1995. He also organized an exercise program for his region and won an award for the most employees participating in the program. On-the-job experience includes two details as assistant director of the Salmonella Task Force, a detail as acting AVIC for the Miami Animal Import Center, and service on the regional Safety and Health Council for 4 years. Last summer, he directed the importation of the equine athletes for the Olympic Games, an event for which he won praise from the international horse community.

"We must improve our ways of doing business," says Arza. "In Georgia, I have been putting the customer first for many years. And this past year, I facilitated the development and implementation of the vision with our field veterinary medical officers and animal health technicians in Georgia."

Mollie Frazier

Frazier's current job with PPQ is assistant officer in charge for Alabama in Mobile. Before coming to Mobile in 1991, she worked as an officer at the Port of New Orleans, LA. As a Federal Women's Program Manager from 1982 to 1988, she identified areas of concern in her workplace and then provided awareness programs to the employees in her region. Through her proactive approach and her ability to maintain objectivity when listening to employees, the agency got few complaints. Temporary duty assignments include details to the Mediterranean Fruit Fly Project, the boll weevil project, and passenger clearance at Houston Intercontinental Airport. She also served on PPQ Central Region's employee utilization committee, making site visits to work units to identify concerns from the field. From 1988 to 1991, Frazier served as local president of the National Association of Agriculture Employees (NAAE), Branch 3, and as NAAE regional vice president.

"I have 15 years with PPQ," says Frazier, "and I'd like to help shape the direction of the agency's

future. I see this assignment as seizing an opportunity to make a difference."

Barbara Maehler

Maehler began her career with PPQ in 1978 as a PPQ maritime officer in San Pedro, CA. The following year she transferred to Oakland, CA, and worked there until 1985 when she returned to school, earning a teaching certificate and teaching in northern California for 5 years. In 1991, Maehler returned to PPQ as an officer, becoming NAAE president in 1992. Currently, she is a first-line supervisor for PPQ at the San Francisco International Airport where she facilitates port management team meetings on a regular basis and has successfully brought opposing groups to consensus. As NAAE president, she wrote a proposal for an alternative work schedule for employees, negotiated with management for a trial period, and had both management and employees collect the data necessary to evaluate alternative scheduling. It has been

permanently implemented at SFIA since 1992. Maehler is also a member of PPQ's core team for the vision.

"I sincerely believe in the vision and Change Agenda," says Maehler. "I want to be proactive in making our work environment more professional, more productive, and a more positive and nurturing environment for employees. We can do this through implementing the vision."

Tim Ohashi

Ohashi, who works for ADC, is now the assistant State director in Hawaii. He became a certified wildlife biologist in 1991 and president of the Hawaii chapter of the Wildlife Society from 1990 to 1992. He participated in the ground-breaking Vision Strategy Conference in 1995. Through his work on the brown tree snake project in Guam, Ohashi collaborated with other Federal, State, and territorial officials. Innovations include collaboration with PPQ in a program to select and train Jack Russell terriers for snake detection.

"In my Government career," says Ohashi, I have been frustrated and disheartened with governmental processes, organizational structures and management styles that seem to stifle the creativity and spirit of the employee. I have also been treated with dignity, respect, and have been empowered to excel. I found that good leadership is essential to employee satisfaction. I want to be a field vision advocate because I believe that I am empathetic to the concerns of field personnel."

Greg Taylor

Currently a veterinary medical officer in eastern South Dakota, Taylor joined APHIS through its Public Veterinary Practice Career Program in 1991 in Albuquerque, NM. As a Captain in the U.S. Army Reserves, Taylor performed active duty in Thailand and the Philippines. For APHIS he has worked as a field VMO in three States, has worked as a relief

veterinarian at three different Canadian ports and one Mexican port, and has served several times as a monitor for the heifer spay program in Mexico.

"I have always had vocal and what I think are innovative approaches to the kind of services we should be providing," says Taylor. "We should be in close contact and in tune with the needs of the industries we serve and protect."

First Steps

During their week in Riverdale this past December, the advocates had a chance to meet with each other at night and to talk with the AMT and members of the achieving vision team to discuss viable strategies for reaching field employees.

"We decided that we will act as a resource to the whole community for implementing the vision, says Maehler. "We will be advocates for all field employees across geographic and program lines."

"One of our first actions when we get back to our posts," says Ohashi, "will be to identify supervisors and managers who have bought into the vision and become champions for them. We will be encouraging them to share their successes with other managers and put them in touch with people and resources that can help them."

"Another thing we need to do is convince field employees that the AMT is serious about implementing the vision and Change Agenda," Ohashi adds. "They are concerned that it's not happening fast enough, and they want to know how they can help."

"Without the buy in of field employees, the vision won't happen," agrees Frazier. That's why we need to encourage our employees to form partnerships and give them the opportunity to decide how they want to work and what works best."

"For us to have success implementing the vision in the field," says Arza, "our group must quickly develop a reputation for getting things done. We are developing strategies that will do just that! One is by removing barriers. We want to be known as 'barrier busters.'"

"We all thought it critical that we take a few ideas that we have been talking about and help

implement them immediately," says Taylor. "For example, AC's Ron De Haven has suggested that with some training, PPQ officers at ports can begin inspection of pets traveling on airlines for AC. AC inspectors, who aren't located at ports, would then follow up if PPQ alerted them to problems or possible violations."

During the coming year, the field vision advocates will be working to foster an environment of empowerment and self-reliance among field employees so they will begin solving problems, making relevant changes, and implementing the vision at their local level. ♦

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Staff Hosts Biotechnology Workshop for Latin America

By Quentin B. Kubicek, *Biotechnology and Scientific Services, PPQ*

In 1996, APHIS received a grant from the Foreign Agricultural Service's (FAS) Emerging Markets Program to help fund a biosafety workshop for high-level Latin American plant health officials. Early last October, APHIS and FAS sponsored the first biotechnology biosafety workshop for Latin America in Riverdale, MD. The objective of the workshop was to develop a more common hemispheric regulatory environment for genetically engineered plants and their eventual commercialization.

The idea for this workshop was initiated by Administrator Terry Medley when he was director of Biotechnology, Biologics, and Environmental Protection (now PPQ's Biotechnology and Scientific Services (BSS) staff). Workshop coordinators were PPQ's Quentin B. Kubicek, BSS trade policy liaison, and Sivramiah Shantharam, team leader of the BSS staff. Former Acting Associate

Administrator Al Strating welcomed the participants, who attended from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Uruguay, and Venezuela. Observers from the Philippines, Taiwan, other U.S. Government agencies, trade organizations, and the private sector also participated.

U.S. Government policy for biotechnology has always been that the products of biotechnology do not differ fundamentally from those produced or modified by traditional genetic procedures. Accordingly, the risks associated with the products of biotechnology are the same kinds of risks as those associated with products modified by other methods. At the workshop, PPD, PPQ, and IS representatives made presentations on plant-quarantine and risk-assessment methods, emphasizing the similarity of the risk.

Twenty Crops

Today, APHIS has approved more than 20 genetically engineered crops for commercialization in this country. Examples include insect-resistant corn, herbicide-tolerant soybeans, virus-resistant papayas, and herbicide-resistant cotton. Some of these are now grown by farmers in the United States and are sold commercially as food for humans, feed for animals, and products for consumer use. Before these crops and/or their products can be exported, U.S. trading partners need to establish or clarify regulatory processes that will allow these U.S. products to enter their markets.

Representatives of some of the countries attending the workshop could adapt genetically engineered crops to their agricultural systems. Some of these countries have the ancestors of genetically engineered crops and feel obligated

(See *BIOSAFETY* on page 14)



APHIS PHOTO BY ANN CZAPIEWSKI

The International Biotechnology Biosafety Workshop included participants from 12 Latin American countries.

Orlando Commemorates Native American Heritage Month

By Anthony Man-Son-Hing, PPQ, Orlando, FL

November was Native American Heritage Month. In commemoration, the Orlando, FL, PPQ office planned a series of special emphasis events, including hosting a Native American speaker.

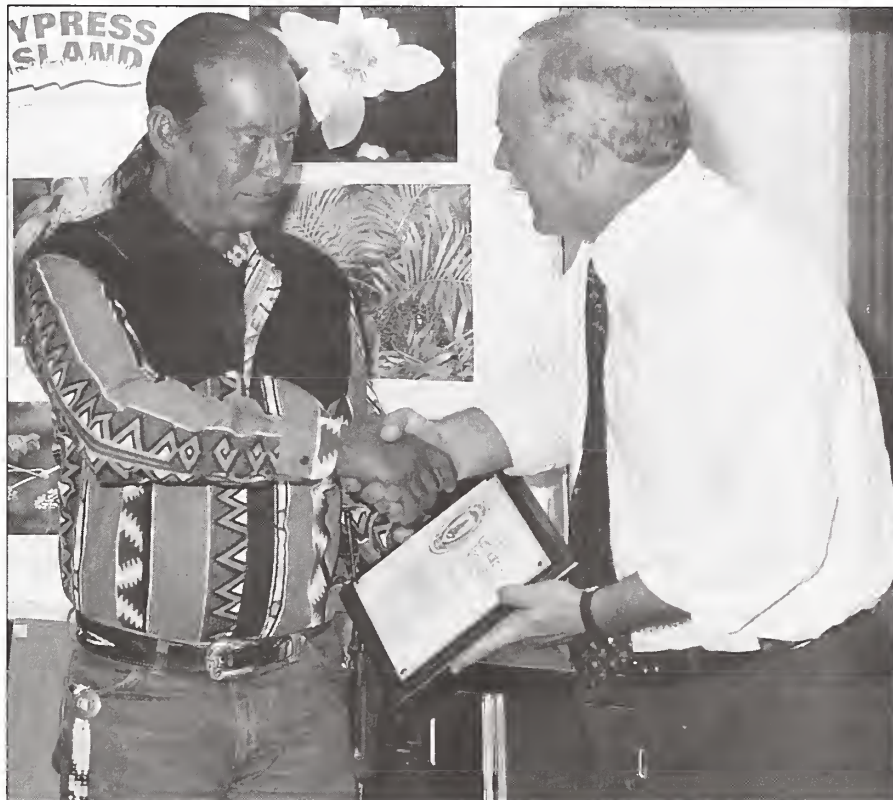
Attending this event were employees from the VS office in Tampa, FL, and PPQ offices in Orlando, Winterhaven, and Palmetto. The speaker, Donnie Rainbird, is a Cheyenne Indian. He spoke about the Seminole Indians, Native Americans in the State of Florida, and also about his own life.

Rainbird was born on the Cheyenne and Arapaho Reservation in Con Cho, OK. He is the direct descendant of Cut Nose, medicine man of the Southern Cheyenne Tribe, and his wife, Cedar Grove, a medicine woman.

In 1966, Rainbird moved with his family to central Florida, where he attended a local high school. After graduation in May 1968, he enlisted in the U.S. Army and fought in Viet Nam. Upon his return to central Florida, he secured a job as a superintendent of construction of the Walt Disney World site.

Currently, Rainbird is director of the Village of Many Tribes, a nonprofit organization on Cypress Island set up to preserve Tribal traditions. He also volunteers at the Osceola and Orange County School Systems, where he talks about his heritage and teaches the children respect for "Mother Earth."

Jose Crespo, PPQ assistant officer in charge at Orlando, was impressed with the speaker and his message. "He had a great impact



APHIS PHOTO BY ANTHONY MAN-SON-HING

Cheyenne Indian Donnie Rainbird accepts thanks from PPQ's State Plant Health Director Mike Shannon.

on his audience, and he gave me a new perspective and reality of Native Americans," says Crespo.

"It was both educational and intriguing, and I got a lot out of it," claims Vernon Bridges, senior PPQ officer.

At the end of Rainbird's presentation, Michael Shannon, Florida State Plant Health Director, presented Rainbird with a certificate of appreciation. "You are an

inspirational individual," commented Shannon, "and I can't imagine a better way for us to think about Native American Heritage Month."

The entire session was captured on video tape for further use. If you are interested in getting a copy, please call me at (407) 648-6857 or (407) 825-4222. ♦

Private Sector Takes Over Medfly Production in Guatemala

At the beginning of this fiscal year, the private sector took over producing sterile Mediterranean fruit flies (Medflies) in the production plant near Guatemala City, Guatemala. The plant, located on the Laguna El Pino National Reserve in the department of Santa Rosa, is owned by the Moscamed Program—an international cooperative program composed of the United States, Mexico, and Guatemala. The word “Moscamed” is Spanish for Medfly.

For more than 20 years, the Moscamed Program has prevented the spread of Medfly to Mexico and the United States. Supported by APHIS representation and funding, the El Pino sterile insect rearing facility is a critical supplier of sterile Medflies to the Guatemala-Mexico border barrier and the California Medfly eradication and control program. Two facilities in the State of Hawaii also supply flies for the California program.

“The private sector management of El Pino is a unique demonstration of APHIS’ commitment to reinventing Government and the Guatemalan government’s commitment to privatization,” says Leonard Beans, IS contracting officer. The Moscamed Program applied APHIS’ expertise and funding to contract out the man-

agement, operation, and maintenance of the El Pino facility to a private Guatemalan company, Biosistemas, S.A.

The story of this remarkable shift from public to private-sector management goes back about 5 years, when the Moscamed Program began experiencing difficulties in funding all necessary Medfly activities in Mexico and Guatemala. “We realized we needed to streamline our operations or change our way of doing business,” says Alan Green, Medfly program manager with IS’ operational support staff in Riverdale, MD.

Cost-Saving Measures

In the next several years, the Moscamed program tried various cost-saving measures, including introducing a new single-sexed strain of Medfly. In traditional sterile insect technology (SIT), insects of both sexes are reared and sterilized with radiation. Then they are released over infested areas so that the sterile males can mate with fertile females. Eggs fertilized by sterile males will not develop, thus breeding the Medfly out of existence.

“For more than a year,” Green explains, “the Moscamed Program has been using a temperature-

sensitive-lethal (TSL) strain of Medflies in Guatemala. Developed by the International Atomic Energy Agency, the TSL Medfly gets its name from the genetic susceptibility of the strain’s female to high temperatures. The females in this strain have a naturally occurring gene that makes them sensitive to heat. In the plant, workers raise the temperature just enough in the egg phase of rearing the insects to kill the females. Male flies survive, and are dispersed over infested areas.”

“In field trials,” explains Green, “PPQ’s Methods Development scientists in Guatemala and Hawaii were able to demonstrate that the TSL strain was several times more effective than standard strains of sterile Medflies. The cost per million of field-delivered, sterile males should be about the same as the standard bi-sexual strain of sterile Medfly.”

A New Plant

In 1994, the program made a major decision—to replace the old plant. It was simply becoming too costly to repair, and the equipment was outdated. A new modular facility was constructed on land donated by the Government of Guatemala and funded by the Moscamed program. The new facility is capable of producing sterile fruit flies and biological control organisms. It is located far enough from the old plant so as to require a new labor force. IS Regional Director Gordon Tween saw that the timing was perfect for a switch to private-sector operation. At the old plant, labor problems were compounded by the inability of the Moscamed Program to legally streamline its excess workforce.

In the following year, IS’ Beans, working with U.S. and Guatemalan officials in the Moscamed program, developed a contract for a private sector business to take over the running of the plant. As conceptual and philosophical decisions evolved, Beans found himself selecting aspects of both a services contract and a concession contract. Production of quality flies was always an objective and a concern. Under a straight services contract, a contractor could say the product was poor because the



This aerial view shows El Pino, the new sterile fly production plant near Guatemala City, Guatemala.

MOSCAMED PROGRAM FILE PHOTO

program didn't control the temperature or humidity, or because it bought poor ingredients for the larval diet. Under a concession contract, the contractor would control the heating and cooling and buy the diet material as well as manage labor and production.

A Facility for the Americas

As the private-sector management became a reality, all of the players realized that Latin American countries could benefit from a single private facility that would rear sterile flies and biological control organisms. If the contract could provide incentives for the contractor to sell insects to foreign countries or international programs for the benefit of phytosanitary or animal health programs, it would be more attractive to prospective bidders.

"Actually, there were no contractors in Guatemala or anywhere else in the world who had experience raising sterile insects for large-scale operations," says Beans. "In the solicitation, we looked for companies that had experience managing agribusiness, especially in controlling insects damaging fruits and vegetables or in using strict environmental controls with narrow tolerances for temperature and humidity variation."

In the contract that was developed and awarded to Biosistemas, the Moscamed program agreed to pay the contractor for managing, operating, and maintaining the facility. The contract also requires Biosistemas to produce 125 million sterile flies per week (standard strain) or 50 million flies per week (TSL strain)—a baseline level of production. "This is the services part of the contract," says Beans.

But the contract goes further, allowing Biosistemas to operate the facility for profit—the concession part of the contract. Biosistemas can sell sterile insects to the Moscamed Program, to USDA, to California and other State governments, and to other clients that the company can



MOSCAMED PROGRAM PHOTO

Posing in front of a plaque dedicating the new Medfly plant are IS' Gordon Tween (left), former Moscamed Program Co-Director (United States) and Horatio Natereno, Moscamed Program Co-Director for Guatemala.

develop through its marketing efforts. If the production level goes above the baseline, Biosistemas and the Moscamed program will share the profits. For the first \$1.05 million in profits, the company will keep one third; a second third will go into a capital replacement fund, and the Moscamed program will receive the remaining third as a rebate on its contribution (i.e., its concession fee). Profits above \$1.05 million are divided equally between the contractor and the Moscamed program. Ultimately, the Moscamed program's share of this revenue may allow it to recoup its investment and reduce or eliminate APHIS's share of the baseline funding.

The contract also includes an agreement for transferring existing SIT technology to the private contractor and provision for exchanging technical information in the future.

The Vision

"As IS Regional Director and Moscamed Program Manager in Guatemala, Tween had the vision that started the privatization process," says Beans. "I was the contracting officer who drafted the contract and became the chief negotiator while on assignment to

M&B's Resource Management Systems Evaluation Staff in Riverdale, MD."

Guatemalan officials provided legal research and counsel and assisted with the draft. Farouk Hamdy, new regional director, and John Stewart, new Moscamed program manager, helped in the final stages of contract negotiations.

"All terms of this unique contract are subject to negotiation," says Beans, "and already, we are making modifications. For example, Pierre Arsenec of M&B's Resource Management Services and Evaluation Staff has made several trips to Guatemala advising and assisting both the Moscamed program and Biosistemas in the development of a professional cost accounting system to support their contractual arrangement. There is enough flexibility in the contract so that we can cooperate with Biosistemas to help the contractor maintain a quality product." ♦

Gulfport Holds Ribbon-Cutting for New Building in Compound

By Mike Legendre, National Monitoring and Residue Analysis Lab, PPQ

This past October, employees at PPQ's National Monitoring and Residue Analysis Laboratory (NMRAL) in Gulfport, MS, commemorated completion of a new building at the APHIS compound in Gulfport. The ribbon-cutting ceremonies were for Building 4—the newest of the 17 buildings that make up the roughly 4-acre APHIS site in Gulfport.

Building 4 now houses the laboratory's administrative staff and the chain-of-custody staff—employees responsible for receiving, logging, storing, and reporting on all samples sent to NMRAL for chemical analysis. The employees on these two staffs had previously occupied a Quonset hut, which dated back to the late 1950's and was plagued with maintenance problems. Needless to say, they were delighted to celebrate their move.

The day began with a tour for visiting dignitaries of the PPQ Southeastern Regional Office (SER—Building 1), the Imported Fire Ant Laboratory (Building 16), and the NMRAL facilities housed in seven of the compound's buildings. Then came the building dedication marked with the ribbon cutting and speeches. The observance concluded with refreshments and an informal question-and-answer session between the compound staff and the dignitaries.

At the dedication ceremonies, SER Director Jerry Fowler served as the master of ceremonies, and Mississippi Congressman Gene Taylor was the keynote speaker. Other dignitaries attending the event included the Mayor of Gulfport, PPQ's Biological and Scientific Services Director John Payne, Imported Fire Ant Station



APHIS PHOTO BY ANDREA BREAL

NMRAL Laboratory Director Joe Ford (center) and Congressman Gene Taylor cut the ribbon during the dedication of Building 4, in Gulfport, MS, as PPQ's SER Director Jerry Fowler looks on. The Gulfport compound houses 85 APHIS employees, 28 at the laboratories, 48 at the regional office, and 6 at the imported fire ant program.

Leader Homer Collins, and NMRAL Laboratory Director Joe Ford.

In his comments to the entire Gulfport staff, Congressman Taylor highlighted the value of the work performed by Federal employees. "I encourage you to seize every opportunity to explain to people the work you do and why it's important to them," he said, "in order to counteract the negative publicity generated frequently in our society."

Formerly under BBEP, but recently merged into PPQ, NMRAL serves as a support laboratory to APHIS programs, especially eradication programs and agricultural quarantine inspections. NMRAL scientists analyze environmental components and selected foodstuffs for residues of pesticides and other chemicals used on

crops. Through contracts with other government agencies, NMRAL employees also analyze residues of industrial and agricultural chemicals.

"I want to thank the many people within APHIS who made this new building possible," remarked Ford at the dedication. Ford's thanks included the SER staff, former SER Director Bob Strong, and several employees of M&B's Management Services Division.

Brazil—IS retiree Herbert Murphy from Gamaliel, AR, and PPQ's Alester Simmons from Atlanta, GA, worked in Brazil from the end of September to mid-December inspecting shipments of mangoes destined for the United States.

Bolivia—VS' David Vogt from Riverdale, MD, Franklin Humphreys from Clinton, MS, and Jack Amen from Hagerman, ID, went to La Paz, Bolivia, in October to discuss the proposed importation of alpacas and llamas from Bolivia into the United States and to inspect the proposed embarkation quarantine facility in La Paz. On November 12, a shipment of llamas and alpacas from Bolivia were released from the Harry S Truman Animal Import Center, Key West, FL, completing another successful quarantine. The pre-embarkation quarantine of another shipment of camelids in Bolivia is beginning.

China—China has just opened a multimillion dollar semen and embryo market for U.S. exports. A Chinese delegation met with APHIS employees in Washington, DC, during the first week of September 1996 to discuss animal health issues of mutual interest. Ray Miyamoto, IS Agricultural Attache in Beijing, arranged and facilitated the meetings as part of the U.S. delegation. After the meeting, the Chinese inspected 13 artificial insemination and embryo transfer centers throughout the United States. Upon the delegation's return to China, they informed APHIS that they had approved two artificial insemination centers and nine embryo transfer centers. This approval will allow the United States to export bovine semen and embryos to the People's Republic of China.

A shipment of 130 Shorthorn cattle collected from various Northeastern States left for China on December 10. VS' Najam Faizi coordinated the shipment with the field and the exporter.

This past October, VS' Faizi and Dennis Senne held 2 days of technical talks with China's

Animal and Plant Quarantine Division in Beijing to avert a potential ban on U.S. live poultry, hatching eggs, ratites, and poultry meat and to answer any questions they had concerning the alleged presence of highly pathogenic avian influenza in the United States. As a result of these technical talks, China has agreed not to place a ban on any U.S. States for importing poultry and poultry products. China is the largest market for U.S. poultry, hatching eggs, and ratites, and the second largest market for U.S. poultry meat.

Colombia—Colombia lifted its oriental fruit fly fumigation requirements for fresh fruit and vegetables from California and Florida. Argentina is considering a partial lifting of its ban on fruit fly host material from the United States.

Chile—PPQ's Norma Díaz from Los Angeles, CA, and Ofelia Taboas from Miami, FL, traveled to Santiago, Chile, from November 12 to December 19 to inspect fruit and vegetables destined for the United States.

The Chilean Ministry of Agriculture finally issued a protocol for the importation of fresh apples and pears from California, Oregon, and Washington after 6 years of negotiations between the plant quarantine authorities of both countries.

Japan—PPQ's Richard Scott from Elizabeth, NJ, traveled to Japan from November 19 to 23 to inspect the refrigeration equipment on board a vessel destined to the United States.

A Japanese delegation met with VS' Andrea Morgan and Otis Miller for a week this past November. They worked out the final details concerning Japan's proposed new import regulations for certifying salmonid eggs from the United States. Now VS is waiting for Japan's reply.

Mexico—Administrator Terry Medley, PPQ's Acting Deputy Administrator Al Elder, and 20 additional PPQ officials traveled to

Veracruz, Mexico, at the end of October to attend NAPPO's 20th anniversary meeting. NAPPO provides protection to the plant resources of the North American continent while facilitating intra- and inter-regional agricultural trade. NAPPO is directed by an Executive Committee comprised of Elder and his counterparts in Canada and Mexico.

PPD veterinarian Craig Chioino traveled to Mexico City the last week of November to attend the Fifth Annual Meeting of the Consultative Technical Counsel of Animal Health (CONASA). At this meeting Chioino presented a model for a risk assessment plan.

VS' veterinary officer Walter Howe went to Camargo, Satevo, Mexico, from October 15 to 19, to oversee the spaying of heifers for importation into the United States.

This past October, IS' Mexico City office negotiated an agreement with the Mexican Forestry Health office to allow U.S. exporters from the States of Pennsylvania and New York to export Christmas trees to Mexico.

Morocco—IS' Alan Green, Riverdale, MD, and Joan Sills, Rome, Italy, visited Morocco this past October to review a proposal for a systems approach for exporting red tomatoes to the United States. The team reviewed Mediterranean fruit fly trapping and research data in support of the proposal.

South Africa—VS has initiated a project to import goat embryos from the Republic of South Africa. Veterinarians, who have already been recruited, will be supervising the project in that country. Also, VS import staffers are developing protocols for the importation of bovine semen and embryos from that country.

Spain—PPQ's William Harkins, Harlingen, TX, was in Valencia, Spain, from October 4 to December 22, inspecting citrus fruits destined for the United States. (See *MARKETPLACE* on page 12)

Open Season for the Thrift Savings Plan Lasts Through January

By Lynn Barba, M&B, Human Resources Division

Open season for the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) began November 15, 1996, and lasts through January 31, 1997. During this open season, eligible employees may elect to begin contributing to the TSP, change the amount of their TSP contributions, change their TSP allocations among the three investment funds, or cancel their contributions to the plan.

Employees, whether they are covered by the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) or by the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS), may invest all or any portion of their TSP contributions in any of the three TSP investment funds—the Government Securities Investment (G) Fund, the Common Stock Index Investment (C) Fund, and the Fixed Income Index Investment (F) Fund.

For 1997, the IRS has announced that the annual limit on elective deferrals (employee contributions made on a tax-deferred basis) will continue to be \$9,500.

New TSP pamphlets were mailed directly to employees with their leave and earnings statements in November. To elect, change, or cancel TSP withholdings, employees must submit a completed TSP Election Form (TSP-1, revised 9/90 or later). Field employees can obtain forms from Human Resources Operations (HRO) in

Effective Dates of TSP Changes

Elections received	Become effective
By January 4, 1997	January 5, 1997 (Pay Period 1)
Between January 5–18	January 19, 1997 (Pay Period 2)
Between January 19–31	February 2, 1997 (Pay Period 3)

Minneapolis; headquarters employees can get forms from HRO's Headquarters Customer Services (HCS) in Riverdale, MD, or Washington, DC.

As you complete your TSP-1 form, please observe the following:

- Submit only one change to TSP withholdings during the open season election period.

- If you are currently under the CSRS retirement system or CS-Offset, you may elect to contribute up to 5 percent of your basic pay. If you are under the FERS retirement system, you may elect to contribute up to 10 percent of your basic pay.

- You may elect your investment either in whole percentage points or in dollar amounts, but not both. For example, you may elect a 5 percent withholding or a \$60 withholding per pay period.

- When allocating portions of your investment to different funds, percentages must total 100 percent, and they must be in multiples of 5 percent. For example,

you may allocate 50 percent to the G Fund, 5 percent to the F Fund, and 45 percent to the C Fund for a total of 100 percent.

- Complete all items on the form, including your signature and the date. Incomplete forms will be returned to you for completion.

Because the TSP open season is more than 2 months long, we believe you have plenty of time to submit your changes to us. Therefore, we will not accept registrations after the deadline. The TSP-1, with an original signature (faxed copies are not acceptable), must be received in HRO,

Minneapolis or HRO/HCS, Headquarters, by close of business on January 31, 1997.

If you have any questions about the Thrift Savings Plan, contact your servicing personnel staffing specialist. ♦

Marketplace, From Page 11

Suriname—IS scientists Alan Green and Dale Maki from Riverdale, MD, traveled to Paramaribo, Suriname from November 16-22 to attend an international meeting to launch the Regional Program for the Control of Carambola Fruit Fly in South America.

Turkey—Jonathan Jones, National Export Programs manager for PPQ's Phytosanitary Issues Management Team, traveled to Ankara, Turkey, the week of November 25. He and representatives of the Foreign Agricultural Service finalized a formal interim agreement with officials of the Turkish Ministry of Agriculture. The agreement will permit APHIS

to resume issuing phytosanitary certificates for shipments of U.S. wheat, corn, soybeans, and sorghum. These grains represent a yearly export market of about 100 million dollars. ♦

ADC Employees Memorialize Two Who Die in Plane Crash

By Stuart McDonald, Public Affairs, LPA, Denver, CO

The ADC Program and the Utah Department of Agriculture have erected a memorial in remembrance of two animal damage control specialists killed when their plane crashed last October 10 in Mallard County, Utah. Jeffrey Yates, an ADC employee, and Darwin Mabbutt, a retired Utah Department of Agriculture employee cooperating with ADC, were both killed in the crash.

Located on the north lawn of the Utah Agriculture Department building at 350 N. Redwood Road in Salt Lake City, the memorial and a purple locust tree planted alongside it recall the contributions of Mabbutt and Yates.

Both family members and coworkers attended a memorial service held on November, 21, 1996. At the service, Utah Agriculture Commissioner Cary Peterson eulogized Mabbutt and Yates as "humanitarians who understood the need to maintain balance as they worked to protect food-production efforts for all Utahans."

ADC Deputy Administrator Bobby Acord announced at the memorial service that ADC will create memorial awards named after Mabbutt and Yates. The awards will be given annually to exemplary ADC employees, Acord said.

Rare Fatal Accident

The Utah crash was the first fatal accident involving ADC personnel in more than 30 years. Mabbutt had more than 30 years' flying experience in the ADC program, with more than 13,000 hours of aerial hunting time. He won the USDA Flight Safety Award in 1992. Yates had 550 hours of flying time in the program. "They were two of the best at what they were doing," said Jim Winnat, Utah ADC State Director, now retired. "We are puzzled at what caused the crash."



UTAH DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE PHOTO BY LARRY LEWIS

Linda Mabbutt (left) and Lori Yates assist in planting a tree at the memorial service honoring the memory of their husbands, Darwin Mabbutt and Jeffrey Yates.

Predator-hunting planes usually cruise 100 to 200 feet above the ground at about 60 to 70 miles per hour. When it crashed, the Piper Super Cub was flying over level sagebrush and grass, chasing a coyote that apparently had killed a calf. The cause of the crash is being investigated by the National Transportation Safety Board.

ADC is a joint Federal-State program; in Utah, ADC employs

more than 2 dozen predator-control specialists, who work both on the ground and from the air. Fourteen of these specialists are Utah Department of Agriculture employees who cooperate with ADC on predator control. ♦

Biosafety Workshop, From Page 6

to preserve their integrity. Once these ancestor crops are gone, they're gone forever. Workshop participants also addressed trade issues and held energetic discussions on trade in biotechnology products in relation to the World Trade Organization.

Tasting the New Technology

The workshop included several interesting opportunities to see genetically engineered products up close. A reception, hosted by the Biotechnology Industry Organization, included a meal made with ingredients produced from genetically engineered plants. The Monsanto Agricultural Company organized a site visit to the Claude Moore Colonial Farm in McLean, VA, so participants could see a public display of genetically engineered plants. Another opportunity was a visit to Zeneca Plant Sciences in Wilmington, DE.

Administrator Terry Medley closed the workshop, presenting each participant with a certificate of completion. For the future, some of the workshop participants have requested that APHIS continue to provide information and assistance in developing their own regulatory oversight system for biotechnology.



APHIS PHOTO BY ANN CZAPIEWSKI

Participants from Uruguay (left) and Argentina exchange information during a break at the Biotechnology Biosafety Workshop.

Once these import requirements are in place, it will be easier for U.S. exporters to market their products internationally.

To learn more about biotechnology in trade, contact Kubicek or Shantharam at 301 734-7601. ♦

Congratulations!

... to **Richard Dolbeer**, an ADC scientist with the National Wildlife Research Center, for receiving a research award in recognition of superior achievement in the creation of new knowledge of bird behavior. Dolbeer, leader of the Ohio Field Station, was honored for his innovative research protecting grain crops from bird damage, reducing the threat of bird-aircraft collisions, and solving problems caused by urban Canada geese.

... to **Gary Larson**, ADC Eastern Regional Director, who along with two other Extension Service wildlife damage specialists, received a communication award for editing and creating the two-volume handbook, *Prevention and Control of Wildlife Damage*. This book is the only comprehensive reference of North American vertebrate species causing economic damage.

... to **Ved Pal Singh Malik**, biotechnologist with PPQ's Biotechnology and Scientific Services staff, for becoming a Fellow of the National Academy of Agricultural

Sciences in New Delhi, India. This prestigious organization is the Indian equivalent of our National Academy of Sciences. As a lifetime member, Malik will be interacting with Indian agricultural scientists on behalf of APHIS and helping assure food security for India. ♦

Alumni Organization

The APHIS Alumni Organization (AAO) continues to meet regularly on the first Wednesday of each month. During the October and November meetings, employees and alumni gathered at seven sites across the country to participate. Sites were Riverdale, MD; Mission Viejo, CA; Sacramento, CA; Olympia, WA; Moorestown, NJ; Conyers, GA; and Dothan, Alabama. PPQ retiree and former Southeast Regional Director Wayne Granberry attended his first AAO meeting by teleconference from Dothan in November.

Liability Insurance

AAO Executive Secretary John Kennedy chaired the October meeting and brought up the topic of liability insurance for AAO members who participate in APHIS activities. AAO member Charlie Nigro responded that he carried his own professional liability insurance when he worked. He agrees that if AAO members are going to be working on APHIS programs, they and employees need some type of protection. In the November meeting, one suggestion was that employees and retirees be allowed to pick a professional liability plan the way they now pick their health insurance. Between the October and November meetings, Kennedy met with the Organization of Professional Employees of the Department of Agriculture (OPEDA) to discuss its liability plan. That plan offers protection to employees against law suits resulting from the performance of official duties. Kennedy also advised AAO members that legislation signed by the President in September permits Federal agencies to pay half of the premiums for professional liability policies. M&B Deputy Administrator Phyllis York advised that a memo will be coming to explain this option and pointed out that agency participation may depend on ability to pay. Kennedy agreed to head a task force to pursue liability coverage.

Retiree Benefits

Two members of M&B's benefits team attended the October meeting and briefed AAO members on the latest information about benefits. Topics included recent legislation, civil service reform, and the National Health Bill. In addition, they gave information on financial planning before and after retirement. Rosemary Witcoff and Pat Bickle distributed a number of handouts on these subjects.

Agency-AAO Partnership

AAO officers Harry Mussman, Scot Campbell, John Kennedy, AAO member Norvan Meyer and AAO coordinator Terry Hall met with Administrator Terry Medley and APHIS management team (AMT) members in October to discuss the APHIS-AAO partnership. The AAO envisions active AAO organizations in each State. The agency could then tap the vast pool of retired or former employees as needed, and AAO members could solve potential problems at the local level before they escalated and required time and resources. Meyer gave an example of how Arizona retiree Floyd Smith read an article in a local paper about a business not giving proper care to animals. As a former employee, Smith knew that the agency enforces the Animal Welfare Act, but he did not know who to contact. He decided to write to VS about the matter, but currently there is no process whereby he could inform the agency of local problems. With an AAO contact in each State, Smith could have called this person, be briefed on the current regulatory procedures, and assist the agency by looking into the matter. Scott Campbell brought up the need for a skills data base, and AMT members agreed this would be helpful for both domestic and emergency programs.

The following decisions came from the meeting:

- Distribute a letter that describes the APHIS-AAO partnership to all APHIS employees and active members of the AAO.
- Involve AAO members on scientific panels within APHIS.
- Extend the vision of One APHIS to the AAO.

- Use *Inside APHIS* to link current and former employees and to inform new retirees about AAO activities.

- Use the APHIS home page on the Internet as another way to share information with and about retirees.

Administrator Medly and his managers made it clear that they fully support the AAO-APHIS partnership. Medly directed his managers to meet with AAO representatives and organize and implement AAO support activities.

Miscellaneous

The group discussed (but did not decide) the best place for the association to receive its mail. It was suggested that the group's letterhead contain both APHIS and AAO names to reflect the mutuality of the relationship. AAO member Rosemary Stanko suggested that AAO inform all retirees that they can receive Government identification. This identification can facilitate AAO members' entrance into Government buildings and to events.

Your AAO Contact

To obtain information or to have your name added to the list of AAO members, contact AAO liaison Terry Hall.

Telephone: 202-720-6544

Address: USDA, APHIS, PPD, 0099 South Building, 1400 Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, DC 20250. ♦

Corrections

We neglected to report the retirement of OA's Norman Leppla, on September 30. Leppla worked in Riverdale, MD.

We incorrectly reported that BBEP retiree Harry Richardson worked in Holcomb, MS. Not so. Belfore retiring, Richardson worked at Gulfport, MS.

We incorrectly reported that PPQ's Frederick Broughton, Bronx, NY, retired. Broughton should have been listed under "Deaths."

We regret the errors.

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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